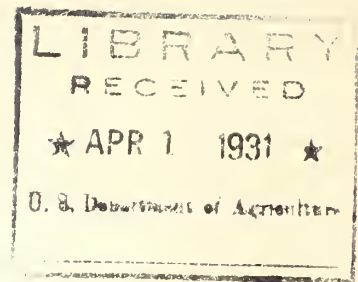


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MOTH CONTROL

A radio talk by Dr. E. A. Bach, Bureau of Entomology, delivered through WRC and 39 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, March 19, 1931.

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I hope you listeners are not numbered among the many persons whose mohair covered furniture harbors moths. When you housewives pay several hundred dollars for a suite of mohair furniture you dislike to see bare spots develop in the cover. One of the maddening things about it is that often you do not suspect that moths are eating furniture covers until their looks have been destroyed. When the bare spots appear you seldom realize that the ordinary clothes moth is the destroyer.

Clothes moths attack mohair covers in two ways. They either eat off the pile itself from the upper side or they work their way beneath the cover. The injury is known as surface feeding or feeding from below the surface, according to where the worms are located.

Surface feeding is the result of carelessness on the part of the housewife. As soon as mohair furniture is placed in a home where clothes moths are, the flying moth may begin laying eggs in the pile of the cover. These eggs, left unmolested for from 6 to 8 days in warm weather, will hatch into very small white worms that crawl down between the rows of the pile and there spin their long thread-like tubes from which they emerge and eat off the pile. If you discover moth webbs on the upper surface of the mohair warp it is a sure sign of a case of surface feeding resulting from too infrequent brushing or vacuuming of the cover.

Feeding from beneath the surface of the mohair is more insidious and more difficult to detect. In fact, the moth worm feeds like a thief in the night, little suspected and seldom seen. It eats off the woolen threads of the pile where they pass beneath the foundation warp. Then when the furniture is brushed or vacuumed the severed threads of the pile fall away. In this manner the bare spots develop and continue to grow in size and ugliness as the worms continue their feeding unmolested.

Persons often ask How do moths get into upholstered furniture? Many even say that furniture manufacturers and upholsterers put moths into furniture on purpose. This is not so. Good furniture is today manufactured of insect-free materials. In many factories mohair covers are treated to render them as nearly moth resistant as science makes possible. Too few persons realize that almost

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every home harbors some clothes moths and that untreated mohairs are subject to infestation in retail stores and in the home where moths are about. If you wish to make certain that no moth life is present in a piece of newly purchased furniture, ask to have it fumigated before delivery. Then should difficulty develop later in the home, no question can arise as to responsibility for the presence of insects.

Fortunately, there never was a time when the public is getting the benefit of so much research on the part of furniture manufacturers and dealers. Everything is being done to offer the public an excellent product. There is no reason why you should not purchase any type of furniture that appeals to your fancy. But, remember, carefully watch valuable furniture, with susceptible covers. At the first indication of moth webs or falling pile, immediately consult your furniture dealer and ask to have an inspection made. If webs or worms are found on the outside of the covers, down among the tufts of pile, then be assured that you have not been brushing the pile often enough to dislodge the moths. Furniture should be thoroughly brushed at least once a week.

If bare spots are developing and there are no visible outward signs of moths, then be assured that moth worms are beneath the cover and you must have your furniture fumigated. Fumigations are best conducted in fumigating vaults built for this purpose. You will find them in all modern furniture storage warehouses and in many other concerns for the extermination of insects. If you cannot get such a fumigating service you can control moths in the home by use of paradichlorobenzene crystals. These are spread over the covers just before the furniture is well wrapped for several days in blankets at a time when the temperature is 70 degrees F. or above. While the home treatment does not always effect a complete cure it is cheap, safe, and suitable for housewives who cannot engage a professional fumigator. There are available also, in many cities and towns moth-proofing services which consist in the application of solutions to furniture covers. These solutions in many instances are guaranteed to impart a moth protection that is of practical value. Further information regarding moths in furniture and their control can be had from Farmers' Bulletin 1655, issued by the Department, "The Control of Moths in Upholstered Furniture".